



# **Gunnersbury Catholic School**

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

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Governing Body Committee: Welfare Committee  
Chair of Governors: Andrew Flatt

**Gunnersbury Catholic School strives to educate all its pupils within an environment where the Catholic traditions of learning, truth, justice, respect and community are promoted.**

**School Mission Statement**

## **Policy Rational**

Gunnersbury Catholic School seeks to provide a genuine Christian education through which all may come to recognise the dignity of the person and the basic equality of all people, where every child matters. In line with our mission we strive to ensure that no pupil suffers hurt or bullying at the hands of others. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and it affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

All members of the School community are expected to respect each other and encouraged to talk about problems they may encounter. Any student who is being bullied is encouraged to speak to someone that s/he trusts, such as a teacher. Gunnersbury Catholic School takes every report of bullying seriously and any incident of bullying will be investigated. Where bullying is proven, a range of sanctions may be applied depending upon the seriousness of the situation. These sanctions include discussions with parents and students, being placed on a school report, referral to a senior member of staff, withdrawal from favoured activities, exclusion from lunch time, a period of time in reflection during a Pastoral Support Day or exclusion from the school.

It is the responsibility of every member of the school community to prevent bullying and report it where they suspect it may be happening. Staff have a duty to investigate bullying **whenever** it is reported to them, regardless of the status of the person accused of bullying. All students and members of staff are expected to adhere to Gunnersbury's rules and expectations.

## **Aims of the Policy**

1. To provide a clear Policy to which staff, pupils and parents are committed.
2. To promote and foster good relationships between pupils and to promoted preventative measures to tackle bullying.
3. To develop coherent strategies to deal quickly with bullying as and when it arises.
4. To endeavour to ensure the welfare and wellbeing of all pupils.
5. To establish a caring and supportive environment underpinned by Christian values.

## Identification of Bullying

All school staff should be watchful, observing social relationships between pupils both in the classroom and in all other areas of the school. Pupil distress or unexplained periods of absence will be monitored.

Pupils should be encouraged to identify cases of bullying and report them to a member of staff.

Parents should alert the school of their concerns by contacting their child's Form tutor in the first instance or their Head of Year. In the case of more serious concerns, parents are advised to contact the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility over their child's year group .

Records will be kept up to date to help identify victims, perpetrators and patterns of bullying.

## Definition of Bullying

Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. This can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice.

How does bullying differ from teasing/falling out between friends or other types of aggressive behaviour?

- There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate.
- There is often a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.
- It is usually persistent.

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of hate crime related bullying and cyberbullying. If the victim might be in danger then intervention is urgently required.

## What does bullying look like?

Bullying can include:

- name calling
- taunting
- mocking
- making offensive comments
- physical assault
- taking or damaging belongings
- extorting money or items of value
- cyber bullying - inappropriate text messaging, inappropriate comments on Social Media and inappropriate e mailing; sending offensive or degrading images/videos by phone or via the internet

- producing offensive graffiti
- gossiping and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- excluding people from groups.
- bullying linked to gang membership or activity.

Although bullying can occur between individuals it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become the 'bystanders' or 'accessories'.

### **Specific types of bullying include:**

- Prejudice crime related bullying of children with additional educational needs or disabilities, homophobic and transphobic bullying or related to race, religion or culture
- bullying related to appearance or health
- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- sexist or sexual bullying
- Homophobic/Transphobic bullying and using homophobic or transphobic language

There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

### **Where does bullying take place?**

Bullying is not confined to the school premises. Bullying may also persist outside school, in the local community, on the journey to and from school and at all times via the internet and cyberspace.

Bullying can take place between:

- young people
- individuals or groups

### **Cyberbullying**

The increasing use of digital technology (including mobile phones) and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims. We will ensure that our students are taught safe ways to use the internet (see our e- safety policy) and encourage good online behaviour. E-safety advice will be delivered in assemblies, Living Faith/PSHE lessons and through the ICT curriculum.

Whilst most incidents of Cyberbullying occur outside school we will offer support and guidance to parents/carers and their children who experience online bullying and will treat Cyberbullying the same way as any other forms of bullying.

## **Support/Action**

In order to discourage bullying and to support victims, it is essential that swift, firm and consistent action is taken.

### **Initial approach**

- Take the incidents or reports of bullying seriously. Do not dismiss the complaint.
- Assess the situation and take the necessary action required as quickly as possible.
- Deal with any minor incidents, reporting both the incident and the action that you have taken to the Head of Year.
- More serious incidents must be reported, without delay, to a Director of Key Stage (or other member of SLT in their absence)
- Heads of Year will report all incidents of bullying and associated staff actions to their Director of Key Stage

### **Next Steps**

- The requirement for further action and sanctions will be determined by the Director of Key Stage
- As appropriate the Head of Year or the Director of Key Stage will disseminate the relevant information about an incident, and the action taken to the relevant members of staff and parents.
- Such members of staff may include: Heads of Year, Senior Leaders, Form Tutors or, on occasions, all Staff, if there is a situation where everyone should be vigilant.
- Parents will be informed of their child's involvement in bullying and their co-operation will be expected.
- Response to bullying will depend on the nature of and frequency of the offence.
- Victims will be supported by the pastoral team who will endeavour to build up the victim's confidence and self-esteem.
- Repeated bullying and/or grave incidents of bullying will be reported to the Deputy Headteacher who will determine the required response
- The Deputy Headteacher will determine the necessity for the Headteacher's involvement
- In response to serious episodes of bullying the Headteacher may exclude, if necessary permanently, the bullying perpetrator.

## **Prevention and strategies**

Gunnersbury aims to develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This involves working with pupils on bullying through the curriculum, through Living Faith/PSHE, Dedicated Events or Projects, and through Assemblies.

Our Catholic ethos aims to promote good behaviour, where Pupils treat one another and the School Staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for Staff and other Pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

### **Intervention**

Disciplinary measures aim to be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any Special Educational Needs or Disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.

Staff will also consider the motivations behind Bullying Behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

Pupils who report an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and will be supported, whether it is the student being bullied or the student who is bullying. Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved. Pupils being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development. Those who bully will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying.

Strategies to tackle Bullying will:

- Involve parents, to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied.
- Involve pupils. All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders;
- Regularly evaluate and update our approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'Acceptable Use' Policies for computers;
- Implement Disciplinary Sanctions. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Also children with different family situations, such as Looked After Children or those with caring responsibilities. We will educate our pupils that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable
- Provide effective Staff Training.

- Work with the wider community such as the Police and Children's Services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a Criminal Offence may have been committed. Successful schools also work with other Agencies and the Wider Community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school;
- Make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying;
- Create an inclusive environment. Schools should create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination; and
- Celebrate success. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

## **Criminal law**

Whilst bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, we recognise that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If Gunnersbury school considers that an offence may have been committed assistance may be sought from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

## **Bullying outside school premises**

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff (*this legislation does not apply to independent schools*). This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The Head teacher will consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or antisocial behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.